

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10

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R 061557Z JAN 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1141

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 005

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: MOOD OF DESPAIR IN WAKE OF BUS MASSACRE

REF: BELFAST 4.

1. PREVAILING MOOD IN ULSTER MONRING FOLLOWING GMACHINE-GUN KILLING OF TEN PROTESTANT TEXTILE WORKERS IS ONE OF DESPAIR. ELEVEN WORKMEN TAKEN FROM MINIBUS EVENING JAN 5 BY GROUP BETWEEN TEN AND TWENTY MASKED MEN NEAR WHITECROSS, COUNTY ARMAGH. THIS VERY NEAR SCENE OF KILLING TWO OF FIVE CATHOLICS PREVIOUS NIGHT (REFTEL). AFTER RELIGION DETERMINED, MEN WERE EXECUTED BY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE. CATHOLIC DRIVER OF BUS SPARED. ONLY SURVIVOR CRITICALLY WOUNDED. WHILE SHOOTING OF CHATHLICS JAN 4 BELIEVED PERPETRATED BY FRINGE PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY GROUP SUCH AS RED HAND COMMANDO, THERE LITTLE DOUBT BELFAST THAT MASSACRE JAN 5 COMMITTED IN REPRISAL BY MAIN REPUBLICAN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, PROVISIONAL IRA. PROVISIONALS ALSO BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING RESERVE CONSTABLE IN COUNTY LONDONDERRY SAME NIGHT.

2. WHITECROSS AMBUSH SUCCEEDED DESPITE INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES INTRODUCED IN COUNTY ARMAGH AREA JAN 5. THESE UNCLASSIFIED

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INCLUDE INTENSIFIED ARMY PATROLS AND CHECKPOINTS AND TRANSFER

THERE OF ENTIRE FORCE OF "A-SQUAD" DETECTIVES WHOSE MISSION IS TO INVESTIGATE AND PREVENT SECTARIAN MURDERS. THIRD BATTALION ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT CALLED TO FULL TIME DUTY IN COUNTY ARMAGH AND "MURDER TRIANGLE" AREAS FROM JONING JAN 6. STATEMENTS FROM SECURITY SPKESMEN RANGING FROM SECSTATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MERLYN REES TO ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARLY INSPECTOR COUNTY ARMAGH EXPRESSED INABILITY PREVENT SECTARIAN MURDERS WITHOUT COOPERATION POPULACE IN PROVIDING INFORMATION ON TERRORISTS. SECSTATE HAS CALLED FOR MEETING WITH LEADERS ALL NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL GROUPS FOR NOON TODAY. THIS MAY BE OCCASION WHEN LARGELY-CATHOLIC SOCIAL DEMONCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY CAN GIVE AND CALL FOR UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT OF ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARLY. SEAMUS MALLON, ONE OF SDLP'S MOST VOCIFEROUS CRITICIS OF SECURITY FORCES, CONDEMNED ALL TERRORISTS IN RADIO INTERVIEW NIGHT JAN 5. MALLON ALSO SAID HE "NEAR DESPAR" ABOUT SITUATION. THIS FIRST TIME THIS SENTIMENT EXPRESSED PUBLICLY SINCE NOVEMBER 1974 WHEN CIVIL WAR SEEMED NEAR.

3. MAIN PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY FORCE ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION (UDA) SO FAR CONTINUING EXERCISE RESTRAINT. IN FACT THERE REPORTS ONE OF MOST EXTREME BELFAST AREA LEADERS, DAVID PAYNE, REMOVED FROM COMMAND FOR DEMANDING ACTIONGK ONE OBVIOUS DETERRENT FOR UDA IS LOYALIST RELUCTANCE CONFRONT BRITISH ARMY.

4. SITUATION MAY ALREADY BE BEYOND RETRIEVAL BY ESTABLISHED POLITICIANS. SHOULD REPRISALS CONTINUE CULMINATION COULD WELL BY MOVE BY UDA ON CATHOLIC AREAS BELFAST. SOME OBSERVERS WHO BELIEVE PROVISIONALS HAVE A STRATEGY SEE THEIC TACTICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AT LEAST SINCE TULLYVALLEN ORANGE HALL MASSACRE SEPT 1, AS DESIGNED ULTIMATELY PROVOKE MASSIVE PROTESTANT BACKLASH THAT WOULD PREVENT ANY POLITICAL CONCILIATION. UNLESS NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICIANS AND POPULACE MOVE QUICKLY TO TRY TO TRANSLATE CURRENT DESPAIR AND ANGER TO POSITIVE ACTION THEN IN WORDS OF MERLYN REES, ONLY THE KILLERS WILL GAIN.
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